

The Man Under the Machine

By A. M. SIMONS

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


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THE MAN UNDER THE MACHINE.

The Life of the Worker To-Day.

How do you get your living? How does the nation as a whole get its living? Why do many people not get a living at all, but just enough to let them die slowly? Are there not enough things to go around? Are we, as a people, getting all we can from the earth and dividing it among those who get it out in the best manner possible? If not, how may things be changed for the better?

These are important questions and if we can find answers to them we shall be much better off. Probably you never thought very much about them or if you did you passed them by with the feeling that things had always been as they are and you could not change them. But perhaps before we are done we shall be able to show you that you not only can change these things, but that you and your fellows are the only ones who have the power to change them, and finally that when they are changed you will be able to live a great deal better and do very many things that you cannot now, but that you wish very much to do.

You must have noticed that today there are

very many men who are duplicating each other's work. You see whole rows of grocery stores, each one with a couple of clerks or an overworked owner, and wife and children pressed into service, and all of them barely keeping alive, while if there were but one store in the neighborhood the same work could be better done with half the same number of persons. A little closer look will show you that much of the work that is being done is helping nobody to be better clothed, or fed, or housed. A great deal of time is spent in attracting people's attention to the things that are for sale. Great flaring signs are painted on the walls of the buildings, newspapers are filled with advertisements instead of useful information, sidewalks are littered with goods and all kinds of lying, deception and adulteration are used to make the buyers think that they get something for less money from one seller than from another. Every one can see that if all this work were left entirely undone and the people who are doing it sat with idle hands, there would be just as many things to eat and drink and wear in the world as there are today.

If you watch for a few months you will see that every little while the names on the signs change and many of the stores become vacant. The great department stores and mail order houses have found out that if they do all the buying and selling of fifty stores under one roof and with one management it can be done very much cheaper than when the work is scattered

among so many people and in so many buildings.

Now the man who does a thing the cheapest is the only one who can do it at all in our present society. For if any one tries to do the same thing in a more expensive way he cannot sell his product. This sounds very simple, but it is a fact which has a great importance in regard to the questions we are trying to answer.

One of the effects of this law is that the small stores have to shut up because they cannot afford to sell the goods they have as cheaply as the big stores, or at least they cannot spend so much money in advertising to let the people know what they have.

* Just take a look around you and see in how many places this same law is working. The little manufacturers are being bought up or ruined by the trust because it can, if it wishes, sell its product cheaper than they can. The small towns are dying out because their industries are destroyed, and the people who used to work in them move into the great cities, where things can be produced and distributed cheaper. Finally, we see those nations who can produce the cheapest have grown to be the largest and strongest and are crushing all the weaker nations of the earth. We can sum all this up by saying that there is today a great and widespread movement toward concentration, and that this movement is due to the fact that the largest producers can sell their goods the cheapest.

The object of all industry is simply to change the things which are found upon the earth into forms which will be useful to men, women and children. This is all there is to the matter. No matter how many different forms a thing may take from the time it is a part of the earth until it is used by man, it is still simply a part of the substance of the earth changed in form and moved to some particular place at the time when it is wanted for use. Now it seems like the most natural thing in the world to say that this should be done with as little work as possible. If then the large establishment can do this with less work than the small one, then the large one should be used.

As soon as this is said a great cry is raised about the suffering of those who are crushed and ruined by the great business. If we look closely, however, we shall see that this is really a complaint about the way the goods are distributed, not about the way they are produced, and this is "another story" which we will discuss later.

Very few people today will deny that we could produce all that everybody actually needs. If you do doubt this fact, just stop and think that at the time when men were still savages, they had nearly as much to eat as they have now and that not so very many more of them died from cold and hunger than do today in a great city like London, New York or Chicago. Even wild beasts can, for the most part, find the food and shelter they need, save when they

come in conflict with other and stronger beasts, or when their numbers grow too great for the land upon which they live.

Is this the trouble with men? Are there too many of us? Hardly any thoughtful person will claim that this is the case in the United States or even in most of the countries of Europe, where there are still thousands of acres of unused land and untold riches hidden in the depths of the sea or the bosom of the earth, only waiting for the energy of man to change them into forms useful to sustain and comfort the people who need them.

It surely seems that, with all the wonderful machines, and the advantages of co-operation in work, with the railroads, steamships and telegraphs to bring persons and things together from all parts of the earth, we could easily produce many hundred times more than the naked savage. So we certainly should have a hundred times as many things to use, and no one should lack for anything save those who will not work.

Then again, the only thing the savage feared was a failure of crops, an earthquake, a tornado or a flood. But these are not so much feared at present because if the things destroyed exist anywhere on earth they can be quickly brought where they are needed. Then there should now be no times of great and general distress.

We all know, as a matter of fact, that every few years there does come a time when almost all of our industries stop, when mills lie idle by the hundreds, thousands of workmen and

their children starve, and millions of people have too little food and clothing to keep them alive and well. We call these times crises and say they are caused by "overproduction." The fact that people are hungry is explained by saying that there is too much to eat, and we are told that there is so much clothing that millions must be poorly clad; there are so many houses that millions must be homeless. Rather queer explanation, is it not? Before we are through we shall try to find a better one.

It would not be so bad if the only ones who were suffering were the idlers, but when we look at those who are doing the hard and necessary work in producing what goods we have we find that they are the very ones who have the least. In every great city over 10 per cent of them cannot live at all upon the wages they receive, but must depend upon charity to keep them from freezing and starving.

In London one-half the laborers are buried by the public authorities. In Chicago, if we go along the river wards, or out to the stock yards, we see hundreds of thousands of laborers living with their families in two or three small rooms of a rickety old building, while the atmosphere almost stifles one with its deadly stench. Even the commonest animal needs of these toilers must go unsatisfied most of the time. The children lie down each night with the pangs of hunger still gnawing, and the

mother shivers in every breeze that sweeps up from the lake front or across the prairies.

When sickness at last responds to all these invitations it is only possible to watch the loved one gradually fade away for lack of the simple little articles craved by the diseased body. The only hope of life lies in the visit of a charity doctor or nurse. However kind these may be, the very idea of charity carried by them often makes deeper wounds than their skill can heal.

When at last the murder is done and a dear one has been gradually starved and neglected to death, a terrible question arises between the living and the dead as to whether the last solemn acts of earth shall be performed as the heart yearns to have them, or whether all that remains of the form that once was more than life to us shall be taken away by the "county" to be the prey of the dissecting room. We know that every cent spent upon the dead is taken from the living and means that this same awful choice must be the sooner made again. If we are men, not dogs, every nerve within us must tingle with rebellious indignation, and arouse a determination to never stop until we have found or made a way to end this awful hell.

Every passing year means that more must live in these slums, endure these horrors, and make these ghastly choices. Every new machine robs another class of workers of their skill and livelihood. Every new-formed trust sends an army of "unnecessary" laborers from an "independent" position into the class of wage slaves without a master. Every recurring crisis plunges another mass of laborers and small producers into the awful abyss of poverty, woes and misery of the slums. It may be your

turn next. Is it not time for you to begin to think about it?

How the Laborers' Troubles Came.

"Never mind telling us about how deep the mud hole is in which we are stuck," some one will say. "Just tell us how to get out."

All right, before we are through, we will tell you exactly how to get out, but as you have been told a great many times before, and it has not seemed to help you, we will take time enough and make it so plain now, that you will not only never forget it, but that you will be able to tell it to your fellow laborers so that they can help you out as well as themselves. For of one thing we may be sure, and that is that you must all get out or go to the bottom together.

We can do his better if we know how the laborer came to be where he is now. To know this we must make a little study of history, but as it will be a short one and will concern us all, we should all be interested in it.

Let us take a look at the society of about two hundred years ago. We find almost everything was then made with very simple tools. The shoemaker had only his lap-stone, his knives and awls; the weaver used a simple hand loom; the worker in steel and iron was but a blacksmith with a forge, anvil and hammer. Each one bought the raw material needed, worked it up in his own shop with his own tools and when he was done the product belonged to him alone.

To be sure this way of working seems very crude to us nowadays, and many of our commonest things could not then be made at all. But the things that were made were enjoyed by the makers and they all managed to keep

fairly warm, and to have a plenty of coarse food and a shelter over their heads.

About this time men had been to the new world of America, new routes had been discovered to India and new markets in Africa. Large quantities of goods were wanted to exchange for the products of those countries. This new demand could not be supplied by the old methods of manufacture. Men began to study about the tools with which they were working. One inventor changed the simple tools of the shoemaker into a whole series of machines that made a shoe almost in the time it took the old shoemaker to decide where to cut his leather. The weaver's hand-loom was improved and perfected until it wove miles of cloth where it had once woven yards. The blacksmith shop grew into the great steel works. The anvil took on a hundred forms and grew to monstrous size. The steam hammer rose and fell with the strength of a thousand men. So everywhere the work of days was done with single strokes.

Turn almost any way you will, for every article made a century ago for the comfort of man, a hundred are made today with no more effort. Even if this took place in an insane asylum, one would expect the inmates to at least have enough sense left to use these machines so that all would have the things needed for health and comfort.

Even the best physical existence demands a variety and abundance of good, pure food, plenty of fresh air, and frequent opportunity for rest and recreation. No one should be compelled to live in close, small rooms, do without necessary medical service, or be denied the opportunities of education, culture and travel.

I do not believe there is any one who stops to think about the matter, and who sees how

much can be done with the great inventions we have been talking about and who remembers that even before the machine came people had many of these necessities, will deny that it is possible for every man, woman and child to have everything we ask for and very, very much besides.

Why then is it that at least 90 per cent of all the people must live in a condition but little if any better than that of their ancestors, who knew nothing about any of these improved ways of making things?

We shall find an answer to this question if we go back again to the time when the great invention first came into use and watch the changes that took place then. Each laborer then made the whole of an article, and there was no dispute about its ownership.

When the machines for making shoes had been introduced each man made but a small part of the whole shoe. One man attended to the engine that ran the machines, another fired the boilers, and yet others prepared the leather. Each article was made through the co-operation of a large number of laborers.

To express the change that had taken place in the words of a technical economist—production was now carried on collectively, where as it had formerly been conducted individually.

While each man had worked alone, he owned the tools with which he worked. But when many worked together in one shop with the new tools, it was impossible for each one to own an entire factory, and as an article could not be made without the use of the entire factory, anything less would be useless.

One would naturally think that the laborers who worked together and produced collectively would own collectively the things with which

they worked. If the machines and factories had been the common property of those who used them, all the product would have belonged to the laborers collectively and they could have distributed it among themselves as they saw fit.

But during all the years that the laborer had worked with his own tools their private ownership had been very necessary and right. No one save the owner ever used the tools and hence there is no reason why he should not own them.

So it was perfectly natural that the principle of private property was applied to the new improved tools. But it took a large number of people to operate these tools, while only one, or a very few, owned them. Hence it came about that the owners and users were wholly different persons.

The owner of a machine could do nothing with it unless he could get people to run it for him. He was obliged to buy the labor power of others to operate his machines. This was one of the most important facts in the whole story of labor.

It was necessary for great numbers of the laborers to live close together. Towns and cities grew very rapidly and some parts of them grew to be known as "laboring quarters." The laborers were crowded together in tenement houses in neglected, unsanitary neighborhoods. The slum was here.

It had taken many years for a man to learn a trade under the old system, but once learned he could be sure of work at it so long as he lived. But it needed little strength or skill to watch and guide the new machines, and so women and children took the place of men. The horrible sufferings of these women and

children in the early days of the factory system were such as it is safe to say no race of slaves was ever forced to undergo before or since.

Little children, scarce out of babyhood, were worked until they died off like sheep. They were chained to cars in the coal mines or forced to work at great machines that maimed and slaughtered them. The women, too, toiled on, half naked, at tasks that crushed out the lives of thousands.

How was it possible for these conditions to exist? Because it had come about that everything was settled by competition. Let us explain this point a little. Whoever could do anything or sell anything the cheapest was the only one who could do anything or sell anything at all.

If we apply this to the laborer who is selling himself day by day we find that when all the labor power in the market is not wanted only the cheapest will be bought. That labor-power will be the cheapest which can be produced the cheapest, that is, whose possessor can live with the least to eat, and drink, and wear. The child and the woman can live cheaper than the man, and so they will be hired when their husbands and brothers and fathers are walking from place to place seeking to find some one who will buy a portion of their lives.

If we apply this law of competition to the owners of the machines we discover two things. First we see that only the man who buys the cheapest labor power can run his machines at all, as otherwise he would be undersold and ruined. Second, only the man who has the best machine can produce. So the man who does not own the best machines or any ma-

chines at all must find some one who will buy his labor power.

Finally no one can afford to buy labor power unless he can make a profit on it. To make a profit the articles produced must be sold for more than what was paid for labor power and raw material. But, from the fact that they are the great majority, the laborers must in the end be the ones to buy most of what they produce. The man who buys their labor power cannot eat and drink so many thousand times more than any other man and so he must sell most of his things to those who made them.

But he has only paid them in wages a small portion of what he wants them to pay him for the goods. When they cannot buy all he must shut down his shop or factory and wait until the goods are used up, or wasted, or spoiled. When thousands of firms all over the country are **forced** to do this we call it a crisis.

And at such a time it makes no difference how skilled the workers are at making the things for which people are suffering or how willing they are to work, if they cannot get to use the machines and factories which they must have to produce, the suffering for unmade goods and the existence of unemployed willing laborers must continue. The great difficulty at the bottom of all these troubles is that while the tools all belong to one class, and that class is not able to use them, the labor power which must operate them belongs to another class. The owners are compelled to buy this labor power as cheap as possible and this forces wages down to the starvation point. The laborers cannot then buy their own product and hence the terrible crises come with all their accompanying suffering.

This condition of ownership divides society

into two classes, one of which owns everything and produces nothing, while the other produces everything and owns nothing—not even their own bodies, for necessity forces them to sell these piece-meal to secure a living, and when they can find no purchaser they can no longer live.

The Class Struggle.

As great numbers of the laborers now worked together with improved machines they were able to produce much more than the same number of workers could have done working separately with the former crude tools. But since they were only paid the same as they had always received—a bare living—all this increased product went to the owners of the tools.

Before the time of the capitalists the landlords had owned the most important thing in the production of wealth—the land—and had ruled society. They made laws forbidding the laborers from leaving the land upon which they were born.

They were required to work a certain number of days each week for the lord of the manor (the landlord), and during the remainder of the time they had to support themselves. We are very apt now, in looking back on those times, to think that it was very strange that the serfs, as the laborers were then called, were so foolish as to allow the landlords to make laws saying that land was private property and that no one should be allowed to live unless he worked for the landowners the most of his time. But we must make sure that we do not live in any glass houses before we throw stones.

The landlords being the rulers at this time, they, like every other ruling class, made laws only in their own interest. They wanted things

to stay just the way they were and they were especially anxious that no laborers should be allowed to find any way of living except by working on the land. So they laid many restrictions on trade and manufacture. They had laws saying just how wide and how heavy all cloth must be spun, and when and how all exchanges must take place. They fixed the wages of the laborers by law and decided what kind of goods should be made.

All of those regulations were distasteful to those who were engaged in any kind of manufacturing. In the early days of which we speak, when all manufacturing was carried on in such a simple way with hand tools, the laborers banded together in cities and resisted the laws of the landlords. So there was always a struggle going on between the town and the country.

As soon as the new machines were invented the towns grew very fast. Thousands of laborers were brought together in each manufacturing city and often in a single shop. As the markets grew, things were not produced, as they had once been, because some one wished to use them, but because the owner thought he could find some place to sell them. A wide and free market was a necessity. All the laws that the landlords had made to protect their interest were opposed to the interest of those who were manufacturing. So the manufacturers fought to have them repealed.

Here a very important change is seen. It used to be a fight between the landlord and the artisan. The old guilds of workmen had fought long and hard for their right to live in "free cities" and to enjoy the rights of "citizens." Within the towns the producers had perhaps come as close to ruling as they ever have in the history of the world, and we of today still

look with wonder upon the marvelous things they did—the great cathedrals they built, the beautiful things they wrought in iron and bronze, and wood and marble, the like of which none of our wonderful machines of today can make.

But when the tools with which this work was done were changed into machines the men who worked with these machines no longer belonged to the workers. They were obliged to sell their labor power day by day and week by week to the machine owner. They, like the serfs on the land, were allowed to retain just enough of the product of their labor to keep them alive, while they created wealth for their master and owner; for he who owns the thing whereby a man lives, owns him, no matter whether that thing be LAND or MACHINES—no matter whether that owner be called LANDLORD or CAPITALIST, and no matter whether the man owned be named SERF, SLAVE, or WAGE LABORER.

But let us get back to our story. The owners of the machines, or the capitalist class, as we will call them from now on, were the ones who were reaping all the benefits from the introduction of the machines. Because they owned the machines they retained ownership in the product, only reckoning the labor power in with the other expenses of production.

They wanted to find markets in which to sell these products. Therefore they were the ones who were interested in getting rid of the restrictions which the landlords had placed on trade.

To whip the landlords they had to have the help of the laborers. The capitalists wanted to have control of the government—to become the ruling class, just as the landlords had been. To secure this they enlisted the laborers on

their side and gave them the ballot. Sometimes the conflicts by which the capitalists overthrew the landlords were peaceable, as in England; sometimes they were violent, as in the French revolution. But in all countries, at some stage in the game, the capitalists were forced, sometimes by the discontent of the laborers (more often because their votes were wanted to whip the landlords), to give the working class the right to vote.

The capitalists soon succeeded in very thoroughly whipping the landlords, and the capitalist class became the ruling class, and have continued as such until the present day.

Some people will not believe this. They will say that it is not true in America at least, because this is a "free country" and there are no classes. Let us see about this. What is it that makes classes? Is it not divisions of the people in such a way that some of them have privileges and opportunities that the others do not have? Now will you deny that in America the child who is born in the slums of New York or Chicago or San Francisco or of any other great city is born into a class with very much different opportunities from one who is born on Fifth avenue or the Lake Shore Drive or Nob Hill?

More than that, we have seen that the class of owners are able to make all other people work and support them in idleness. Some one may object to this, and say that the capitalist class do a great deal of work; but before we are through we shall try and see what kind of work it is that they are doing, and whether it is worth doing and who is really doing much of the work we commonly think of the capitalist as doing.

Others will point to the fact that laborers

sometimes become capitalists and vice versa. But this proves nothing. If it could be shown that quite frequently soldiers in opposing armies deserted to their respective enemies' camps, that would not lessen the fact of the existence of two different armies.

Besides it is becoming more and more difficult each day for the laborers to leave their class. With the great capital necessary to do business among the trusts of today it is as impossible for the laborer to become a capitalist as for the Ethiopian to change his skin.

So the next thing will be the question as to whether one of these classes is ruling and the other is subject to the ruling one. Let us examine some of the facts that are around us and see the things which are being done, and then afterwards we shall see if these are in the interest of the capitalist class or the laboring class. If we find that they are all in the interest of the capitalist class, then we shall be justified in claiming that that class is ruling.

First about the government. The one thing which all the governments of today insist upon is the right of private property. It is to secure this right of men to own the things which other men must use or die if they cannot use, that our laws are enacted, our courts and jails established, our police and army maintained, and the whole machinery of government kept in motion. If you do not believe this, just look over the proceedings and actions of any of these branches of government and see for yourself.

The laborers, however, have nothing but their labor power, and hence are not interested in the protection of private property. It might be said that they own their labor power, but, if so, there are few laws to protect it. When the

machine or the trust renders it valueless, there are no laws to protect it, and no one compensates its owner. When he tries to raise its value by withholding it from the market by a strike, he finds that all the laws, courts, police, armies, etc., are used to destroy his "private property." So we must conclude on this point that most of the laws are in the interest of the capitalist class.

But there are other means of ruling society than through the direct making of laws. In fact, we are constantly told that the laborers, being in a majority, can make any kind of laws they please. And this is perfectly true, and the reason why this is written is to help them to find out how to make laws in their own interest and not in those of the capitalists.

Let us now see if we can find the way in which the laborers are made to make laws so against their own interest as these appear to be. If we look close we shall see that the real foundation is laid in the fact that the laborer's mind is ruled first, and through this he is led to rule himself for the benefit of his masters.

Because the capitalist class control all the wealth of society, they are able to say what kind of things shall be produced. This does not include what shall be produced in the mines and factories alone. They can also say what kind of books should be written, what kind of pictures shall be painted, etc., etc. They can do this because of the fact, which we noticed, that things are now made to sell, and the existence of the producer depends upon his being able to sell his goods. But in literature and art the market consists very largely of those whose interests and ideas are with the capitalists.

They will not buy anything that does not

please them and so the artist, the author, the speaker and the editor must say the things that are in the interest of the ruling class. Thus it is that our books have largely been written to tell how wrong it is to do anything that affects the right of private property, and how great and strong and good these rulers are. They tell the laborers to be honest, and industrious, and saving, and hold out before them, as the greatest possible reward they can hope to have, the chance of becoming rich. The cut of the clothing, the manners and customs of all kinds are fixed by the rich. The artists paint only the things which tell the same story. The lectures upon the platform repeat the same lessons. The preachers in the pulpit declare that the teachings of religion are all of the kind that please the ruling class and tend to keep them in power. The newspapers publish only those things which make their papers sell and please advertisers.

All these things taken together build up a custom and a state of society in which everything that strengthens the rule of the capitalists is called RIGHT and GOOD and everything that is against that rule is BAD and WRONG. Of course no one wants to be bad or wicked and so every one does the things that the capitalist class want them to do. and very few of them ever stop to ask whether it is not possible that there is something wrong with the whole IDEA of right and wrong.

The result is that from boyhood to old age the laborer's mind is filled with just the kind of ideas the capitalist class wish him to think. Everywhere that he goes he hears the same story. In day school and Sunday school, in books, pictures, and newspapers, from press, pulpit and lecture platform his every means of

Information are controlled by those whose interest it is that he shall learn nothing regarding his own real welfare. Is it any wonder that he has voted, and that a great majority of his class still vote, as the capitalists wish them to vote?

It was particularly easy at the beginning of the contest between the landlords and the capitalists to get him to fight the capitalists' battles because he had long been himself struggling against the landlords. So now he thought that he was still fighting for himself, not seeing the great change that had come over industry. For while the free laborers of the old free cities were battling for the right to produce goods that were to be their own, the modern laborer is fighting that he may produce goods that belong to the capitalists.

Society advanced from feudalism into capitalism through the class struggle between the capitalist and the landlord, in which the laborer fought the battles of the capitalist. Now the laborer is beginning to see that he has interests that are opposed to those of the capitalist and he is just entering upon another great class struggle which must end in the overthrow of capitalism and the coming of socialism. We shall next take a look at the parties to this last great class struggle and see what are the ways in which it will be fought, the character of the opposing forces, and the final outcome of the battle.

The Laborer of Tomorrow.

When the capitalist class first began to rule they really organized and directed industry. The owners of the great factories were the ones who gathered the laborers together and drilled them in working co-operatively. These owners

competed with each other to find new and improved methods of production and aided greatly in the advance of industry. But in so doing they were not acting as CAPITALISTS but as LABORERS. The fact that sometimes the same men did the work of both classes did not do away with the fact of separate classes or with the fact that the capitalist was, as such, doing no useful work.

Little by little smaller firms were forced to go out of business because the larger ones could produce cheaper. The income from these great plants was so large that the owners no longer needed to act as their own overseers and superintendents. So they chose from among the laborers the brightest and sharpest men and set them to work to control and organize their fellow workers. .

Then the corporation came in. The stockholders in a corporation do not need to know anything about the business in which they hold shares and never have anything to say about its actual management save indirectly and at long intervals, and only then if they have a majority of the shares.

Then the trust comes and its stockholders often do not even know where the plants are located in which their wealth is produced, and not infrequently they are paid on condition that some mill stands idle.

Thus at the same time that the workers have been trained and organized to carry on industry by themselves, the capitalist class have become a class of owners pure and simple. They have nothing to do with the production of goods. But they still take nearly all the product created by the laborer. They can do this because of the laws they have deceived the laborers into making for them.

There are signs that the laborers are beginning to think about changing these laws. They have long been trained to think that things must be right as they are and that change would be wrong or impossible. But every day that passes is showing them that this position is not correct. Their very work is making them think.

When the machines were first used the laborers were an ignorant mob, who had not yet learned to work together. But their work was training them to act together. Their sufferings soon taught them to rebel together.

At first they joined in trades unions and for a long time there was a hard fight to get the right to have such unions. The capitalists did all they could to stop them and imprisoned and tortured those who dared to unite in their own interest. But by taking advantage of the fight which was still kept up between the old landlords and the capitalists the laborers at last got the right to organize.

Then they were able to struggle as a body for the wages the capitalists should pay them. In this way the few laborers who were inside the unions were able to get a little better terms. Although, at no time were there more than a very small percentage of all the workers able to get into the unions, still it was there that they learned how to fight as they worked, unitedly. Here the first beginning of the great lesson was taught them that the great body of producing workers had different interests from the small, powerful body of owning capitalists.

As more and more perfect machines were made there became less difference between trades. The shoemaker, the weaver, the blacksmith, ceased to exist as tradesmen and all

became machine-tenders. Men could easily go from one trade to another, and unskilled men and even women and children could work at many trades. So it became harder for the union to protect its membership and keep their wages up.

But the trust has brought in other changes that are still harder to guard against. The reason why strikes could be won was that the employer struck against always feared that his competitors would get his trade if his mill stood idle. But with the trust there are no competitors, and if the employes strike the public must wait for the product until they are ready to go to work again. Finally unless the strike is universal it can shift its work around among its different plants and run one while the other is idle until the workers are forced to submit. The Standard Oil and the Tobacco and Steel trusts have recently given some examples of these very principles.

All this forces us to the conclusion that something different from the trade union must be employed if we will fight the battles of the whole laboring class. For the trade divisions the union will always prove the best weapon with which to secure a few more pennies from the individual employer, but it has no answer to the problem of how to save the laborer from his slavery to his tools. It will never get the man out from under the machine and make him the master of his own life.

The laborer must find a weapon that all his class can use at once. He must find a ground upon which he can unite as a body against those who oppress him. He must seek a battle ground where numbers count against wealth, and where men, not millions, rule. That bat-

the ground is found at the polls, that weapon is the ballot.

The capitalists have given up all connection with industry. They have turned all the work, whether with hand or brain, over to wage slaves who have been drilled, organized, trained to work as solid disciplined bodies in the production of goods. Let them carry this same principle into the political field.

Let the laborers organize as one solid body of suffering workers demanding that they shall rule instead of the owners. With their overwhelming numbers they can easily make themselves the ruling class in place of the idlers who have so long governed society at every point.

When they have done this then they can organize industry in the interest of the workers, not the idlers. They can then say to every one, including the former owners, "Come and use these instruments of production and create wealth, which shall be for the benefit of all who toil." We will take the mines, the machines, the land, the railroads and all the things that are necessary to the production and distribution of wealth and we will say that these things shall belong to all in common since they must be used in common. We will make the ownership fit the users, not the non-users. Just as when each producer worked individually, the tools were owned by the individuals, so now that the tools are used collectively they must be owned collectively so that there will be no division of product between the workers and the owners, because all will be workers and all will be owners.

Goods will no longer be sold for profit, but will be distributed among those who make them for use, and so there can never be any

overproduction so long as there is an unfilled want and when all wants are filled there will be no suffering. Any one who wishes to work can use the tools which he owns in common with every one else and be sure that he will get what he produces. When a new machine is invented that saves labor it will not mean that a few must work for longer hours while a great number starve for lack of an opportunity to sell themselves. Instead each new invention will mean that all those who have been doing the work that it will do will work shorter hours at easier work and have more time for leisure, education and amusement.

Only the best machines, located in the best places, will be used and nothing will be wasted in running more plants than are needed or in trying to sell goods. So we can produce many many times what we are producing today and no one need want for anything.

The soldiers, and policemen, and lawyers, with the drummers, the sign-painters and bill-stickers, will be given a chance to do something that will help to make people warm, and well, and happy, instead of being forced to do things that do nobody any good. All this will mean that it will be easy to make so many things that all can live in pleasant homes with all that they need to eat and drink and wear and have most of their time to think of other things than their merely animal wants.

There can be no city slums, no crises, no strikes, no lock-outs, no unemployed, no beggars, no charity, no starving, no cringing slaves, no idle masters.

Laborers, these things are for you to do. No one else can do them. No one else should do them. No one else has so much to gain from them. Your class is the class that today have

the skill and training to operate industry, you have the common interests upon which to build a firm society, and you alone have the numbers with which to gain the victory at the polls.

You have long been tied helpless slaves to the machines at which you toil. They have crushed your children, your family, your lives beneath their ceaseless advance. They have been the means of your enslavement. They should be the means of your liberation. Are you men enough to seize your opportunity? Will you in these closing years of this most wonderful of centuries, when the long battle of man with Nature is at last over and man, through the machine, has conquered at every point—will you now permit that the very instrument of conquest shall be held by another class and used to crush its creators? Will you forever meekly follow false leaders to your political slaughter and economic bondage? Will you continue through all time to bind yourself into ever recurring slavery by voting for the puppet parties of your masters? Or will you at last dare to do your own thinking, and casting aside forever the slave-befitting ideas your masters have so carefully implanted in your minds, unite with your fellow workmen of the world, and press forward to victory upon the platform of clear-cut, uncompromising SOCIALISM? It is for you to choose. Which will you do? Will the marvelous powers of production which have conquered nature and are incarnate in the almost living, thinking machine of today prove to be the triumphal chariot upon which you will advance into the new century, or will it be, as in the past, the Car of Juggernaut that you painfully tug onward over the bodies, minds and souls of the helpless members of your

class? Will the laborer of the future be upon or beneath the machine? You, the workers of America and of the world, can alone decide, and because I have infinite faith in you and your class I know that the red glow that is seen around the coming days is not that of a social conflagration nor yet the reflection from the blood-stained society of to-day, but is the first glimmering of the dawn of the better time that is to be.



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